



PRESS RELEASE

House Armed Services Committee

Floyd D. Spence, Chairman

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HOUSE APPROVES FUNDING TO IMPROVE MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE, READINESS AND EQUIPMENT MODERNIZATION PROGRAMS

Today, the House endorsed the Armed Services Committee's effort to address some of the growing quality of life, readiness and modernization shortfalls facing today's military, by passing H.R. 4205, the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001, on a 353 to 63 vote. Upon final passage, Chairman Floyd Spence, issued the following statement:

"I am pleased that a bipartisan majority of the House has endorsed the Armed Services Committee's continued efforts to address serious concerns about the declining state of the U.S. armed forces.

"In recent years, the Armed Services Committee has called attention to the problems faced by the men and women who so proudly serve their country in uniform. Serious readiness deficiencies and equipment modernization shortfalls, made worse by longer and more frequent deployments away from home, have placed serious strains on today's military.

"H.R. 4205 addresses many of these problems. It results in the fifth year out of the last six in which Congress has added to the Administration's budget request. H.R. 4205 increases the President's budget by \$4.5 billion as called for in the Budget Resolution. The additional funds provided in this bill will cover a large percentage of the critical unfunded requirements that the Joint Chiefs identified in the Administration's defense budget. The bill also includes a comprehensive package of military health care reforms that will lead to significant improvements in access to quality health care by all military beneficiaries, particularly for over-65 military retirees.

"H.R. 4205 is a good start toward ensuring that America's military can meet the challenges that lie ahead and ensure the safety and security of all Americans well into the 21st century. However, it is only a beginning, not an end. While this bill makes a significant contribution to reversing a decade of defense cuts, revitalizing our military forces will take an even more aggressive and sustained effort in the years ahead."

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H.R. 4205 authorizes \$309.9 billion in budget authority for fiscal year 2001, \$4.5 billion more than the President's request.